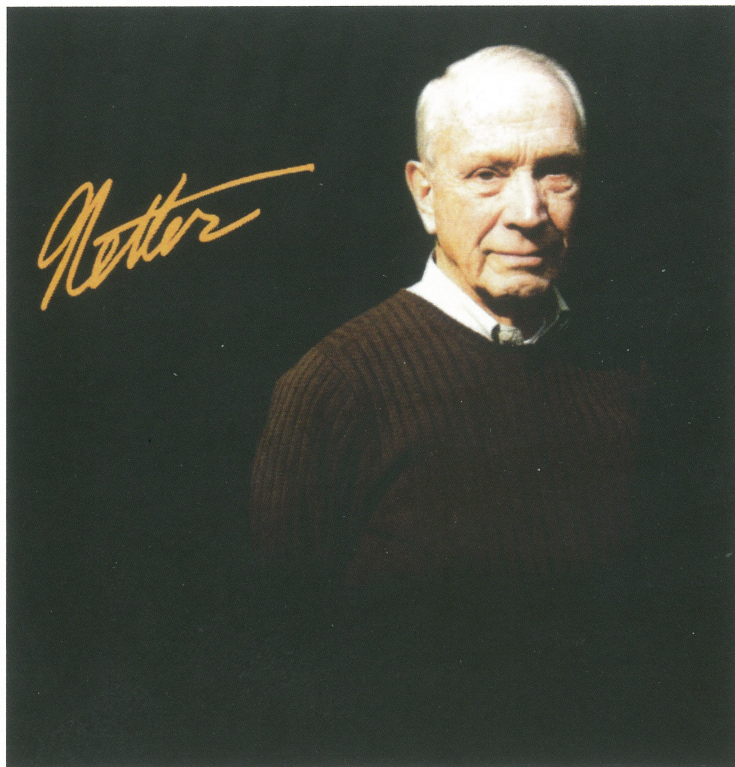


# Terence Netter

## Visions and Revisions Revisited



Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center

5 May – 31 July 2022

## Terence Netter: Visions and Revisions Revisited

In the summer of 1997, the University Art Gallery at Stony Brook presented an exhibition titled "Terence Netter: Visions and Revisions: Paintings from the Nineties." The show was a farewell tribute to Netter, recently retired as the founding director of the university's Fine Arts Center. Although it was not explicitly stated in the publicity, as the show's title implied many of the paintings were modifications of earlier works. Three of them are in the current exhibition, together with other examples of the artist's penchant for returning to and reworking paintings that he had ostensibly completed years, even decades, earlier.

Netter had that tendency in common with his dear friend, Lee Krasner. She once quipped that she couldn't be trusted around her finished work, suggesting that, for her, art was a continual process of evolution that sometimes turned back on itself. The complete catalog of her oeuvre, published in 1995, contains extensive documentation of overpainted canvases and works on paper that became raw material for collages. She was doing this long before she and Netter met, in 1964, and whether they ever discussed the practice is not known. In fact, according to a statement he wrote for a 1988 exhibition of Krasner's work at Stony Brook, in their wide-ranging conversations she didn't talk much about her own work: "She left the talking and the writing to critics and art historians."

Among Netter's paintings on view, two have been traced to their earlier incarnations. *Evening Star: Moon Rising* was once known as *Harvest Moon*, a horizontal canvas from the early 1990s that appears to have originated in the 1960s as an allover composition of subtly blended reds and greens. For its first revision, Netter added a stencil-like layer of solid blue that creates the maple-leaf shapes signifying fall foliage, and the titular moon in the upper right. Still later, the canvas was turned vertically and the moon was enlarged, making it peek out intriguingly as it rises behind the scattered leaves.

In 1967, Netter painted *La Baroque*, using a frottage technique to create articulated shards of luminous floating color. Thirty years later, he added a flat, opaque overlay of yellow ocher that masks nearly half the original composition, allowing tantalizing glimpses of the glowing surface underneath. It makes an interesting comparison to Krasner's *Comet* (formerly *Confrontation*), a 1966 canvas she re-worked four years later, covering most of the exuberant gestural image with a thick layer of white and cream-colored paint.

Whether or not Netter was inspired by Krasner's model of ruthless revisionism, he clearly felt a kinship with her devotion to the creative life, with its inevitable hardships, setbacks, and disappointments, as well as its occasional triumphs, and which gave impetus to the continuous search for resolution on a canvas and for harmony within. These notions were fundamental to the bond that grew over many years into an enduring and meaningful friendship that found expression not only in their work but also in the ongoing dialogues they had on aesthetics and the world of art. In Netter, Krasner recognized an equally sensitive, questing spirit whose artistic journey was impelled by inner necessity. He once defined art as "nature reborn through the free consciousness of individuals," a definition with which she would have agreed.

Helen A. Harrison  
Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw Director

*I am sincerely grateful to Therese Netter for her kindness and enthusiasm for this project, which would not have been possible without her generous cooperation. Thanks also to John and Kristine Woodward of the Woodward Gallery, and to Lloyd Kramer and Scott Chestnut for providing a DVD of their film about Therese and Terence, "The Spiritual Exercises," for viewing in the exhibition, which is supported by funds from the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center Endowment and Thaw Charitable Trust Endowment.*

## Works in the exhibition

The paintings are lent by the artist's estate, unless otherwise noted.

Untitled, 1960s  
Oil on canvas, 21 ¼ x 56 ¾ inches

Untitled, 1960s  
Oil on canvas, 33 x 128 inches

*Short Circuit*, 1990/1993  
Oil and circuit board on canvas, 40 x 30 inches  
Courtesy of Woodward Gallery, New York

*Gothic Reverie: Icon*, 1991  
Oil on canvas, 51 ½ x 41 inches

*Shattered Dream*, undated  
Oil on canvas, 73 x 61 inches

*Sunday*, 1986/1988/1990  
Oil and collage on canvas, 48 x 36 inches

*The Evening Star: Moon Rising*, 1994  
(formerly *Harvest Moon*, ca. 1992)  
Oil on canvas, 97 x 67 inches

Untitled, 1997 (formerly *La Baroque*, 1967)  
Oil on canvas, 61 x 37 inches

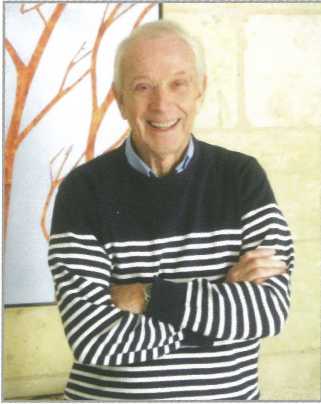


*La Baroque*, 1967



Untitled, 1997

**Donald Terence Netter** (1929-2018) was



born in New Rochelle, New York. After graduating from Georgetown Prep, he entered the Jesuit Order. In 1960 he was ordained in Innsbruck, Austria, where he studied theology under the great Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner, S.J.

After returning to the States and to a position on the faculty of Georgetown University, Netter earned an MFA from George Washington University in 1965. His first solo exhibition was held soon after at the Allen Funt Gallery on Madison Avenue. A review by Stuart Preston in *The New York Times* praising his “abstract style of visionary power” was followed by a *Times* feature article, “A Priest Who Paints,” by Grace Glueck. Appointed Assistant Professor of Art and Philosophy at Fordham University in 1966, Netter helped form the curriculum at the Lincoln Center campus. The following year he joined the stable of the Frank Rehn Gallery, where he had several exhibitions.

In 1968 Netter petitioned for and received Papal Permission to leave the Jesuit Order. Shortly thereafter he married Therese Franzese, who was then the assistant to Sir Rudolph Bing, General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera. This event was the subject of an article, “A Priest Who Chose to Marry,” in the October 1968 issue of *Life* magazine. His second solo exhibition in New York City was held that month. The following year he was appointed Chair of the Department of Fine Arts at Santa Clara University. While there he had a solo exhibition at the Bolles Gallery in San Francisco, and a show of new work at the Rehn Gallery in New York.

Netter was recruited to become the founding director of the Paul Mellon Art Center at Choate-Rosemary Hall in Wallingford, Connecticut, in 1974. While at Choate, he had his third solo show at the Rehn Gallery, which was

favorably reviewed by John Russell in *The New York Times*. He left Choate in 1979 to become the founding director of the Fine Arts Center at Stony Brook University, a position he held for eighteen years, during which he continued to display his work in solo and group exhibitions.

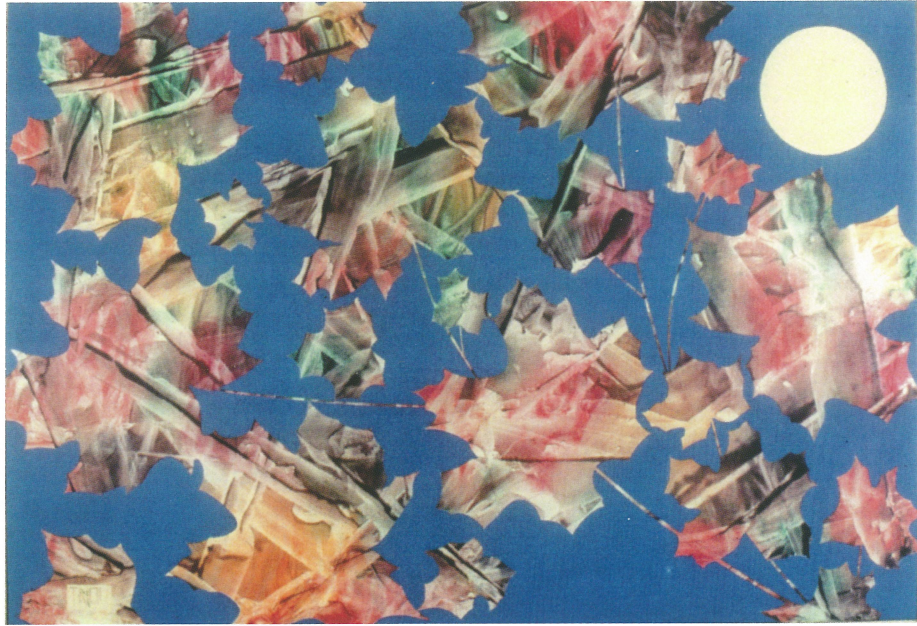
During his tenure at Stony Brook, his recommendation of Lee Krasner as honoree and recipient of the Stony Brook Foundation award was accepted. She received the award for her lifelong dedication to the arts in 1980, and an honorary doctorate of Fine Arts from the State University of New York in 1984, the year she died.

Following Krasner’s death, Netter was instrumental in arranging for the donation of her East Hampton property to the Stony Brook Foundation, to preserve the home and studio where she and her husband, Jackson Pollock, created their major work and encourage the study of modern American art. The transfer from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation took place in 1987, and the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center opened in June 1988.

In 1997 Netter was invited to join the Woodward Gallery in New York City, where he had a solo exhibition at the end of the year. In 1998 he was named Dean of the College of Fine Arts at Jacksonville University, where he remained for seven years. At that time, he and Therese purchased a house in the Loire Valley in France, where he spent many months each year painting, and in the solitude of his studio gave himself to the mysteries found in the diffused light and the long horizontals of shades of gray and blue of the French countryside. Many of these later works were shown in France, at the Woodward Gallery, and at Gallery North in Setauket, New York.

Netter received a distinguished service award from the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center in 2008, and an honorary doctorate of Fine Arts from the State University of New York in 2013. He was also honored in 2017 by Gallery North as a community treasure, in recognition of his contribution to the arts in the community and his years of service as a trustee.

A memorial gathering and exhibition were held at Gallery North in 2019.



*Harvest Moon, ca. 1992*



*The Evening Star: Moon Rising, 1994*



*Short Circuit, 1990 / 1993*

*Pollock-Krasner*  
Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center